

Lord Spencer selected a burial site on an island in an ornamental lake known as The Oval within Althorp Park's Pleasure Garden. A path with 36 oak trees, marking each year of her life, leads to the Oval. Four black swans swim in the lake, symbolizing sentinels guarding the island. In the water there are several water lilies. White roses and lilies were Diana's favorite flowers. On the southern verge of the Round Oval sits the Summerhouse, previously in the gardens of Admiralty House, London, and now serving as a memorial to Princess Diana. An ancient arborvitae stands nearby, which contains trees planted by Prince William and Prince Harry, other members of her family and the princess herself. . . .

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Close Reading: The Art and Craft of Analysis

Do you ever wonder how your teachers can teach the same books year after year and not be bored by them? One reason is that the works we study in school have many layers of meaning, revealing something new each time we read them. That quality is what distinguishes them from literary potato chips, writings that are satisfying — even delicious — but offer little nutritional value. A mystery or a romance may absorb us completely, but usually we do not read it a second time.

How do you find the “nutritional value” in the books, stories, essays, and poems you study in school? Your teacher may lead you through a work, putting it in context, focusing your attention on themes and techniques, asking for a response. Or, you might do these things yourself through a process called **close reading**, or analysis of a text. When you read closely, you develop an understanding of a text that is based first on the words themselves and then on the larger ideas those words suggest. That is, you start with the small details, and as you think about them, you discover how they affect the text's larger meaning. When you *write* about close reading, you start with the larger meaning you've discovered and use the small details — the language itself — to support your interpretation.

As with any skill, close reading becomes easier with practice, but it's important to remember that we use it unconsciously — and instantaneously — every day as we respond to people and situations. We are aware of the interaction of subject, speaker, and audience (remember the rhetorical triangle in Chapter 1?), and we instinctively respond to the context and purpose of our interactions. We also consider style: body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, sentence structure, **colloquialisms**, vocabulary, and more. And when we recount a conversation or describe a situation, we often analyze it in the same way we would write about a text we have read closely.

Take a look at the concluding paragraphs of “Where Nothing Says Everything,” an essay by Suzanne Berne about visiting Ground Zero, the site of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, several months after September 11,

2001. In the essay, which appeared in the *New York Times* travel section in April 2002, Berne writes that she had trouble getting a ticket to the official viewing platform, so she went into a deli that advertised a view of Ground Zero from its second floor. She brought her sandwich upstairs to a table next to a large window.

And there, at last, I got my ticket to the disaster.

I could see not just into the pit now, but also its access ramp, which trucks had been traveling up and down since I had arrived that morning. Gathered along the ramp were firefighters in their black helmets and black coats. Slowly they lined up, and it became clear that this was an honor guard, and that someone's remains were being carried up the ramp toward the open door of an ambulance.

Everyone in the dining room stopped eating. Several people stood up, whether out of respect or to see better, I don't know. For a moment, everything paused.

Then the day flowed back into itself. Soon I was outside once more, joining the tide of people washing around the site. Later, as I huddled with a little crowd on the viewing platform, watching people scrawl their names or write "God Bless America" on the plywood walls, it occurred to me that a form of repopulation was taking effect, with so many visitors to this place, thousands of visitors, all of us coming to see the wide emptiness where so many were lost. And by the act of our visiting — whether we are motivated by curiosity or horror or reverence or grief, or by something confusing that combines them all — that space fills up again.

Using what you learned in Chapter 1, you can probably identify the passage's context and purpose: the writer, not a New Yorker, visits Ground Zero and is awed by the emptiness that was once the World Trade Center; her purpose is to describe the experience to readers who seven months later still feel the immediacy of that September morning.

You can analyze the passage through the rhetorical triangle, considering the interaction of subject, speaker, and audience. Berne's audience, readers of the travel section of a national newspaper, may be planning their own visit and thus may be interested in her personal experience. You can also consider the ways Berne appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos. She establishes ethos by actually going to Ground Zero, not simply musing about it; her emotion-laden subject appeals to pathos; and in an original way, she uses logos, or logic, to show that visitors to the site are repopulating the area that was decimated on September 11.

And there's more. Using close-reading techniques, we can also examine Berne's style. Doing so provides information about the choices she makes at the word and sentence levels, some of which we may use to further analyze this piece.

Analyzing Style

Just as we pay attention to more than the spoken words during a conversation, when we read closely, we look beyond the words on the page. And just as we notice body language, gestures, facial expressions, and volume in our conversations, we can understand a text better by examining its tone, sentence structure, and vocabulary. These elements make up the style of the written piece and help us to discover layers of meaning. Style contributes to the meaning, purpose, and effect of a text, whether it is visual or written.

Look back at the excerpt from Berne's essay. Here are some questions about style that might come to mind based on your first impressions of the passage:

- Why is the first paragraph one sentence?
- In that paragraph, why does Berne call the empty space “the disaster”?
- Why does the third sentence begin with “Gathered” rather than “Firefighters”?
- What examples of figurative language appear in the fourth paragraph?
- Does the word *huddled* in the fourth paragraph remind you of anything else you've read?
- What is the effect of the dashes in the final sentence?

You may notice that these questions fall into two categories: the choice of words and how the words are arranged. We call the choice of words **dic-tion** and the arrangement of words **syn-tax**. Sometimes we talk about style as a matter of *tropes* and *schemes*. A trope is essentially artful diction. A trope could be a **metaphor**, a **simile**, **personification**, and **hyperbole**. A scheme is artful syntax. **Parallelisms**, **juxtapositions**, and **an-titheses** are common schemes.

Here are some questions to ask when you analyze diction:

1. Which of the important words in the passage (verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs) are general and abstract? Which are specific and concrete?
2. Are the important words formal, informal, colloquial, or slang?
3. Are some words nonliteral or figurative, creating **figures of speech** such as metaphors?

When you analyze syntax, you might ask:

1. What is the order of the parts of the sentence? Is it the usual (subject-verb-object), or is it inverted?
2. Which part of speech is more prominent — nouns or verbs?
3. What are the sentences like? Are they **periodic** (moving toward something important at the end) or **cumulative** (adding details that support an important idea in the beginning of the sentence)?
4. How does the sentence connect its words, phrases, and clauses?

These first-impression questions can be categorized as shown in the accompanying table.

FIRST-IMPRESSION QUESTIONS	DICTION	SYNTAX
Why is the first paragraph one sentence?		✓
In that paragraph, why does Berne call the empty space “the disaster”?	✓	
Why does the third sentence begin with “Cathered” rather than “Firefighters”?		✓
What examples of figurative language appear in the fourth paragraph?	✓	
Does the word <i>muddled</i> in the fourth paragraph remind you of anything else you’ve read?	✓	
What is the effect of the dashes in the final sentence?		✓

If you can answer these questions, you will be well on your way toward an analysis of an author’s style and how that style is part of the text’s message.

Talking with the Text

By now, you may be wondering how to generate your own questions to do a close reading. Just start by paying close attention to the choices a writer makes in the way he or she connects subject, speaker, and audience, as well as the choices the writer makes about style. Remember that style is a subset of rhetoric — it is a means of persuasion.

Let’s look at three different approaches to close reading a passage by Joan Didion about California’s Santa Ana winds from her essay “Los Angeles Notebook.” As you interact with the text, keep in mind that you’re not only identifying techniques and strategies, but you are also analyzing their effect. In other words, how do Didion’s choices in diction and syntax help her achieve a particular purpose? To answer this, you must determine what the purpose is, what the choices are, and what effect those choices create.

There is something uneasy in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some unnatural stillness, some tension. What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the

Cajon and San Geronimo Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The baby frets. The maid sulks. I rekindle a warning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.

I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned ominously glossy during a Santa Ana period, and one woke in the night troubled not only by the peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by the eerie absence of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the kind of light sometimes called “earthquake weather.” My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete. One day he would tell me that he had heard a trespasser, the next a rattlesnake.

“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.” That was the kind of wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom. The Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes through, is a *joehn* wind, like the *joehn* of Austria and Switzerland and the *hamsin* of Israel. There are a number of persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of which are the *mistral* of France and the Mediterranean *sirocco*, but a *joehn* wind has distinct characteristics: it occurs on the leeward slope of a mountain range and, although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry wind. Whenever and wherever *joehn* blows, doctors hear about headaches and nausea and allergies, about “nervousness,” about “depression.” In Los Angeles some teachers do not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana, because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland the suicide rate goes up during the *joehn*, and in the courts of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood does not clot normally during a *joehn*. A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions. No one seems to know exactly why that should be; some talk about friction and others suggest solar disturbances. In any case the positive ions are

there, and what an excess of positive ions does, in the simplest terms, is make people unhappy. One cannot get much more mechanistic than that.

Annotation

One technique you can use is **annotation**. Annotating a text requires reading with a pen or pencil in hand. If you are not allowed to write in your book, write on Post-it notes. As you read, circle words you don't know, or write them on the Post-it notes. Identify main ideas — **thesis statements**, **topic sentences** — and also words, phrases, or sentences that appeal to you or that you don't understand. Look for figures of speech, or tropes, such as metaphors, similes, and personification — as well as **imagery** or tropes. If you don't know the technical term for something, just describe it. For example, if you come across an adjective-and-noun combination that seems contradictory, such as “meager abundance,” and you don't know that the term for it is **oxymoron**, you might still note the juxtaposition of two words that have opposite meanings. Use the margins or Post-it notes to ask questions or to comment on what you have read. In short, as you read, listen to the voice in your head, and write down what that voice is saying. Following is an annotated version of the Didion passage:

There is something uneasy in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some unnatural stillness, some tension. What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Geronimo Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The maid sulks. I rekindle a waning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.

I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned ominously glossy during a Santa Ana

Long sentence

is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Geronimo Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The maid sulks. I rekindle a waning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.

Related words: Anxiety, foreboding

Appeal to senses

Short sentences

Forecast

Foreshadowing

More anxiety words

period, and one woke in the night troubled not only by the peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by the eerie absence of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the kind of light sometimes called “earthquake weather.” My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete. One day he would tell me that he had heard a trespasser the next afternoon.

“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote

about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.” That was the kind of wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom. The Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes through, is a foehn wind, like the foehn of Austria and Switzerland and the hamsin of Israel. There are a number of persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of which are the mistral of France and the Mediterranean

Good description

sirocco, but a foehn wind has distinct characteristics: it occurs on the leeward slope of a mountain range and, although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry wind. Whenever and wherever foehn blows, doctors hear about headaches and nausea and allergies, about nervousness, about “depression.” In Los Angeles some teachers do not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana, because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland the suicide rate goes up during the foehn, and in the courts of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood does not clot normally during a foehn. A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions. No one seems to know exactly why that should

At least 7 scientific facts

Why in quotes?

Wild images

Personal anecdote

Look up name

Seemingly contradictory sources of information

be: some talk about friction and others suggest solar disturbances. In any case the positive ions are there, and what an excess of positive ions does, in the simplest terms, is make people unhappy. One cannot get much more mechanistic than that.

Dialectical Journal

Another way to interact with a text is to keep a **dialectical journal**, or double-entry notebook. Dialectical journals use columns to represent visually the conversation between the text and the reader. Let's look at a dialectical journal set up with note taking on the left (in this case, sections of the text you think are important) and with note making on the right (your comments).

NOTE TAKING	PARA	NOTE MAKING
What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Geronimo Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point.	1	"drying the hills and the nerves" — example of zeugma. makes connection between nature and human behavior. Long sentence <i>whining</i> to the end — a "flash point" — like the winds "whining" down the passes and causing humans to act crazy.
"On nights like that," Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, "every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands' necks. Anything can happen."	3	Chandler, who wrote crime fiction, was known for his hard-boiled style and cynicism. His quotation offers another image that supports Didion's view of the Santa Ana winds' effects on human behavior.
Whenever and wherever <i>foehn</i> blows, doctors hear about headaches and nausea and allergies, about "nervousness," about "depression." In Los Angeles some teachers do not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana, because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland the	3	These are impressive reports, from all over the world, and they make Didion's argument about the effects of winds on behavior convincing. They're basically a list — they could almost be bullet points.

NOTE TAKING	PARA	NOTE MAKING
suicide rate goes up during the <i>foehn</i> , and in the courts of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood does not clot normally during a <i>foehn</i> .		
A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions.	3	Sounds pretty scientific: an Israeli physicist sounds like an expert. Another scientific fact for Didion's argument.

Breaking the text into small sections helps you notice the details in Didion's writing; specific word and sentence choices. For example, she connects two seemingly different things in the same grammatical construction ("drying the hills and the nerves"; the technical name for this figure of speech is *zeugma*). She also alludes to crime writer Raymond Chandler, to facts, even to some scientific data. Collecting these bits of information from the text and considering their impression on you prepares you to answer the following questions about Didion's style: What effect is she striving for? How does the effect serve the purpose of her writing?

Graphic Organizer

A third way to organize your thoughts about a specific text is to use a **graphic organizer**. Your teacher may divide the text for you, or you may divide it yourself as you begin your analysis. Use the paragraph divisions in the text as natural breaking points, or perhaps consider smaller sections that reveal interesting stylistic choices. Although a graphic organizer takes time to complete, it lets you gather a great deal of information to analyze as you prepare to write an essay.

The accompanying graphic organizer below asks you to copy something the writer has said, then restate it in your own words; next you analyze how the writer makes the point and what the effect on the reader is. Note that you become increasingly analytical as you move across the columns to the right.

QUOTATION	PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE	RHETORICAL STRATEGY OR STYLE ELEMENT	EFFECT OR FUNCTION
<p>There is something uneasy in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some unnatural stillness, some tension. What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Geronimo Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The baby frets. The maid sulks. I rekindle a warning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.</p>	<p>The winds are creepy. They bring sand storms and cause fires. People know they're coming without being told because babies and maids act strange. The speaker picks a fight and then gives up. The Santa Ana winds make us aware that human behavior can be explained in terms of physical causes and processes.</p>	<p>Personification: the wind whines</p> <p>Cumulative sentence</p> <p>Two short sentences: "The baby frets. The maid sulks."</p> <p>"rekindle"</p>	<p>Giving the wind a human quality makes it even more threatening.</p> <p>Makes her point by accumulating details about what it means that the Santa Ana is beginning to blow.</p> <p>Those simple sentences reduce human behavior to irrefutable evidence. We can't argue with what we see so clearly.</p> <p>Though she's talking about restarting an argument with the phone company, the word makes us think of starting a fire, like the wind does up in the hills.</p>
<p>I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned ominously glossy during a Santa Ana period, and one woke in the night troubled not only by the peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by the eerie absence of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the kind of light sometimes called "earthquake weather." My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete. One day he would tell me that he had heard a trespasser, the next a rattlesnake.</p>	<p>Didion talks about her early experiences with the winds, plus the folklore about them. She mentions things that seem weird — peacocks screeching and a very quiet ocean. She says her neighbors are strange too; one stays indoors, and the other walks around with a big knife.</p>	<p>Subordinate clause in the middle of that first sentence: "when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach."</p> <p>"peacocks screaming in the olive trees"</p> <p>Compound sentence: My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete.</p> <p>"machete"</p>	<p>The clause accentuates Didion's isolation and because it's so long almost makes her experience more important than the Indians who threw themselves into the ocean.</p> <p>Kind of an upside-down image. Peacocks are usually regal and elegant; these are screaming. Also olive trees are associated with peace (the olive branch). Supports the idea that the Santa Ana turns everything upside down. "And" as the coordinating conjunction makes the wife hiding and the husband with the machete equally important.</p> <p>"Machete" is associated with revolutions in banana republics, vigilantes. Suggests danger.</p>

(continued on next page)

QUOTATION	PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARY	RHETORICAL STRATEGY OR STYLE ELEMENT	EFFECT OR FUNCTION
<p>“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.” That was the kind of wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom.</p>	<p>Didion quotes a writer who describes the effects of the wind as causing women to want to kill their husbands. She says that folklore sometimes has a basis in science.</p>	<p>Allusion to Raymond Chandler</p>	<p>Chandler, who wrote crime fiction, was known for his hard-boiled style and cynical views. The allusion to Chandler helps create the ominous tone.</p>
<p>The Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes through, is a <i>joehn</i> wind, like the <i>joehn</i> of Austria and Switzerland and the <i>hamsin</i> of Israel . . . A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions.</p>	<p>This section gives scientific facts about the Santa Ana wind, including its generic name, <i>joehn</i>. Didion names other winds like it in other parts of the world, but says the <i>joehn</i> has its own characteristics. She names some of the effects the <i>joehn</i> has on people in various places.</p>	<p>Complex sentence: “There are a number of persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of which are the <i>mistral</i> of France and the Mediterranean <i>sirocco</i>, but a <i>joehn</i> wind has distinct characteristics: it occurs on the leeward slope of a mountain range and, although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry wind.”</p>	<p>The details accumulate, ending in “hot dry wind” to create a picture of the “persistent malevolent wind.”</p>

The following essay analyzes how Joan Didion creates a sense of foreboding that, in turn, helps her to develop her argument about the winds’ effects on human behavior.

Joan Didion’s Santa Ana Winds: A Mechanistic View of Nature

by Jane Knobler

The ominous description of Los Angeles preceding the arrival of the Santa Ana wind, juxtaposed with a scientific-sounding explanation develops Joan Didion’s view that human behavior is basically a result of mechanics. She recreates the tense, stifling atmosphere that precedes the wind and argues that its effect on the people of Los Angeles can be explained by science. The eerie atmosphere, like a 1930s detective film based on a Raymond Chandler novel, highlights the strangeness of a wind affecting behavior even before the wind has begun to blow.

The effect of Didion’s diction in the first part of the essay is to create foreboding; terror is just over the horizon. The wind cranks the nerves to a “flash point,” causing arguments to be “rekindle[d]”; one needs a “machele” for protection. The reader is reminded of the ease with which disaster visits the West Coast. Forest fires, mudslides, snakebite murder can happen in a moment.

The word choice in the second part of the essay is more scientific; Didion provides names for these dangerous winds as well as statistics and facts about the “suicide rate,” “unmanageable” children, and a “mitigating circumstance for crime.” She supports her view that living in Los Angeles requires an understanding that human behavior is often out of our control. The dark atmosphere the Santa Ana wind creates has concrete, dire consequences that can be reported in terms of misbehavior and death. The vivid description of the impending terror that precedes the Santa Ana wind is highlighted when it is followed by the facts about the evil wind.

Didion’s choice and accumulation of detail also heighten the sense of foreboding. The coming of the wind has negative effects on the baby who “frets” and the maid who “sulks”; it causes the “eerie absence of surf.” The world is in an unnatural state. One cannot trust one’s expectations or perceptions. The long cumulative sentence that describes the “persistent malevolent winds” begins by naming other winds, moves to the wind’s beginning as a “cold mass,” and ends with the increasingly frightening “hot dry wind.” Those last three words reinforce what is “malevolent” in the beginning of the sentence. The wind’s “positive ions” seem at first a scientific explanation, but a second look shows them to be another perversion of nature. Wind should be cool; this wind blows hot. Something positive should bring happiness. These positive ions make us unhappy. Nature is a force to be reckoned with; all of our good intentions cannot stand up to the Santa Ana wind.

The evil Santa Ana winds have a negative effect on human behavior. When they are coming, the only course is to take to one’s bed. Otherwise, one may risk behaving

badly or becoming the victim of someone else's bad behavior. It won't be our fault. It will be the fault of the Santa Ana winds.

• ASSIGNMENT •

The following observation of the wind comes from the 1545 book *Toxophilus* by English scholar Roger Ascham, who served as tutor to Princess Elizabeth, later Elizabeth I. Although Ascham, like Didion, contemplates the effect of unusual winds, the writing is vastly different in some measure because of the more than 400 years between the pieces. Use one of the close reading techniques we've discussed — annotation, dialectical journal, or graphic organizer — to analyze the Ascham text. Explain how the technique you selected helped to make Ascham more accessible to a twenty-first-century reader.

To see the wind, with a man his eyes, it is impossible, the nature of it is so fine, and subtle; yet this experience of the wind had I once myself, and that was in the great snow that fell four years ago: I rode in the highway betwixt Topcliff upon-Swale, and Berowe Bridge, the way being somewhat trodden afore, by wayfaring men. The fields on both sides were plain and lay almost yerd deep with snow, the night afore had been a little frost, so that the snow was hard and crusted above. That morning the sun shone bright and clear, the wind was whistling cloff, and sharp according to the time of the year. The snow in the highway lay loose and trodden with horse feet: so as the wind blew, it took the loose snow with it, and made it so slide upon the snow in the field which was hard and crusted by reason of the frost overnigh; that thereby I might see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day. And I had a great delight and pleasure to mark it, which maketh me now far better to remember it. Sometime the wind would be not past two yards broad, and so it would carry the snow as far as I could see. Another time the snow would blow over half the field at once. Sometime the snow would tumble softly, by and by it would fly wonderful fast. And thus I perceived also, that the wind goeth by streams and not whole together. For I should see one stream within a score on me, then the space of two score no snow would stir, but offer so much quantity of ground, another stream of snow at the same very time should be carried likewise, but not equally. For the one would stand still when the other flew apace, and so continue sometime swifter, sometime slower, sometime broader, sometime narrower, as far as I could see. Nor it flew not straight, but sometime it crooked this way, sometime that way, and sometime it ran round about in a compass. And sometime the snow would be lift clean from the ground and up into the air, and by and by it would be all clapped to the ground as though there had been no wind at all, straightaway it would rise and fly again.

And that which was the most marvel of all, at one time two drifts of snow flew into the West into the East, the other out of the North into the

East: and I saw two winds by reason of the snow the one cross over the other, as it had been two highways. And again I should hear the wind blow in the air, when nothing was stirred at the ground. And when all was still where I rode, not very far from me the snow should be lifted wonderfully. This experience made me more marvel at the nature of the wind, than it made me curious in the knowledge of the wind: but yet thereby I learned perfectly that it is no marvel at all though men in a wind lose their length in shooting, seeing so many ways the wind is so variable in blowing.

Analyzing a Visual Text

Many of the same tools of rhetorical analysis and close reading that we have practiced on written texts are also useful for detecting the underlying messages in visual texts, such as advertisements. Let's look at the accompanying ad for the Dodge Durango.

The rhetorical triangle still applies: what are the relationships among the text's subject (a powerful sport utility vehicle), its audience (the potential SUV buyer), and the speaker (in this case, the artwork and words)? The advertisement appeals to ethos in the text at the top left: it banks on associations to Dodge cars and trucks — power, dependability, toughness. Its appeal to pathos plays on our notion of the cheeseburger as a guilty pleasure; we're meant to associate tolu with wintry, energy-efficient cars. As for logos, the Durango is affordable; it makes sense to own one. Why not enjoy life, drive an affordable SUV, and eat big juicy cheeseburgers?

When we analyze a visual text, we still look at the words, both individually and in the way they are placed on the page. And we study the images the same way.

Look at the text on the top left part of the ad.

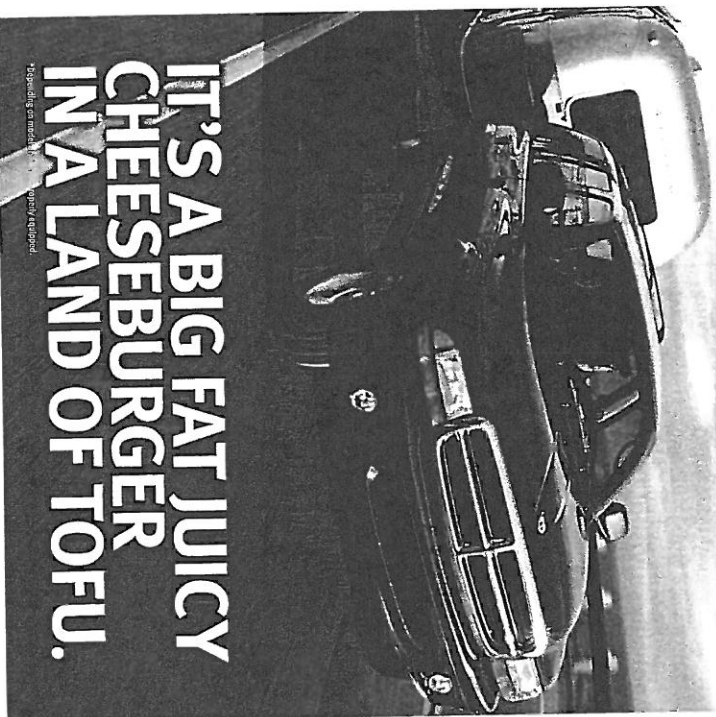
DODGE DURANGO. This is the most affordable SUV with a V-8. Dodge Durango. With nearly four tons of towing, this baby carries around chunks of those winny wanna-bees in its tail pipe.

Note the aggressive tone. How is that sense of aggressiveness created? It may be the repetition of “Dodge Durango” with its hard consonant sounds; it may be the prepositional phrase announcing that the vehicle can tow four tons. It’s a “baby” that carries “chunks” of its competitors in its tailpipe. The use of the colloquialism “baby” contrasts nicely with the image of the car as a predator eating the competition. The owner of a Dodge Durango will be the kind of person whose car is his or her “baby” and who is the leader of the pack, not one “of those winny wanna-bees.”

The Dodge logo — a ram’s head — and the slogan “grab life by the horns” appears at the top right of the ad. Both the image and the words play with the

DODGE DURANGO. This is the most affordable SUV with a V-6 Dodge Durango. With nearly four tons of towing,* this baby carries around crinoids of those wimpy wannabes in its tail pipe. For more info, call 800-4-A-DODGE or visit dodge.com

GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS



connotations of horns: strength, masculinity, and noise. The imperative sentence is a call to action that can be paraphrased as “Don’t be a wimp! Enjoy life now!” The photo, however, is less aggressive. Perhaps it is a pitch to the rising number of female car buyers. In fact, the photo shows a man and a woman in the car, pulling a vintage Airstream motor home, thus suggesting not only a family atmo-

sphere but also good taste, as Airstreams are collectibles. Though the front of the Dodge Durango is outsized, a reminder of the power under the hood, the ocean and sky in the background temper the aggressiveness of the looming SUV; it looks like a beautiful day for a cool couple with great taste to be out for a ride.

Finally, the text at the bottom of the ad has yet another message. The large white letters on the dark road are boldly designed but the message is gentle and even funny. “[Big fat juicy cheeseburger” acknowledges our natural desire for pleasures that are not always healthy. But who can resist when the alternative is tofu? The antecedent of *it* in *it’s is*, of course, the SUV, but the pronoun suggests an understanding, an insider’s wink.

So what is the advertisement’s message? Or are there a few different messages? If you were to write an essay analyzing the “language” of the visual text, you might consider a thesis that argues for the ad’s multiple messages. Here’s one example:

The Dodge Durango ad balances aggressiveness with humor; it appeals to men and women with its reminder that life is too short not to enjoy its guilty pleasures.

• ASSIGNMENT •

Find an ad that either appeals to you or provokes you, and analyze it as we have done with the Durango ad.

From Analysis to Essay: Writing about Close Reading

The more we examine the elements of diction and syntax and consider their effects, the deeper our understanding of an essay, a speech, or a visual text becomes. We also have to reach that deeper understanding when we write about rhetoric and style, or we will end up merely summarizing rather than analyzing the strategies a writer uses to achieve a particular purpose.

Let’s take one text — President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address — through the various stages: from reading it, to analyzing it, to writing about it. Given on a cold January afternoon in 1961, the address was hailed as a return to the tradition of political eloquence. It offers great pleasures to students of rhetoric, rewarding the close reader’s efforts with details large and small that lend themselves to analysis, that inspire imitation, and that have withstood the test of time. As you read the speech for the first time, consider the notion maintained by the ancient Romans and Greeks that eloquence is indispensable to politics. When you read it a second time, have a conversation with the text by annotating it, creating a dialectical journal, or using a graphic organizer.



Watch it on the Web: bedfordstamartins.com/languageofcomp

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, Reverend Clergy, fellow citizens:

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom — symbolizing an end as well as a beginning — signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe — the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage — and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge — and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do — for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom — and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required — not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge — to convert our good words into good deeds — in a new alliance for

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progress — to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support — to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective — to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak — and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course — both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew — remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms — and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah — to “undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free.”

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

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In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation” — a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility — I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other person or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it — and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.

Let’s look at the big ideas in Kennedy’s inaugural address by going back to the Aristotelian triangle. The speaker, the youngest U.S. president, the country’s first Roman Catholic president, having won by a small margin, makes his subject common heritage and purpose, human rights and obligations, rather than policy. Thus, his appeal is less to logos, or logic, than it is to pathos (connecting with his audience emotionally) and to ethos (establishing his own ethical credentials). The audience — those there on that icy morning and the millions watching on television — is vast and diverse. The speech is short, only 1,343 words; its length is, perhaps, the new president’s nod to the live audience standing in the cold on the Capitol grounds. Kennedy appeals to pathos, in part, by reaching his audience psychologically, asking them to consider what they can do for their country. He establishes ethos by offering America as a partner with the “citizens of the world.”

to champion the “freedom of man.” Now it’s your turn to analyze the specific language and arrangement of the speech and to consider the tone that results.

• ASSIGNMENT •

Annotate the inaugural address by John F. Kennedy, or use a graphic organizer or a dialectical journal. Once you’ve identified the diction and syntax, answer the following close-reading questions. Consider how Kennedy’s diction and syntax create the tone of the speech. Also consider how you can use Kennedy’s tone as a basis for an essay on the speech.

Diction

1. Why are so many of the words abstract? How do words like *freedom*, *poverty*, *devotion*, *loyalty*, and *sacrifice* set the tone of the speech?
2. Find examples of formal rhetorical tropes such as metaphor and personification.
3. Does Kennedy use any figures of speech that might be considered clichés? Which metaphors are fresher? Is there a pattern to their use?
4. Do any words in the speech seem archaic, or old-fashioned? If so, what are they? What is their effect?

Syntax

1. The speech is a succession of twenty-eight short paragraphs. Twelve paragraphs have only one sentence, eight have two, and six have three sentences. Why do you think Kennedy used these short paragraphs?
2. The speech contains two extremes of sentence length, ranging from eighty words (para. 4) to six words (para. 6). A high proportion of the sentences are on the short side. Why?
3. More than twenty sentences are **complex sentences** — that is, sentences that contain a subordinate clause. How do complex sentences suggest hidden energy?
4. The speech has many examples of antithesis in parallel grammatical structures: “To those old allies”; “to those new states”; “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich”; and of course, “[A]sk not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.” What does this use of opposites suggest about the purpose of Kennedy’s speech?
5. Why is the dominance of **declarative sentences**, which make statements, appropriate in an inaugural address?

6. Paragraph 24 consists of two rhetorical questions. How do they act as a transition to Kennedy's call for action?
7. Find examples of rhetorical schemes such as *anaphora* (the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines) and *zeugma* (use of two different words in a grammatically similar way but producing different, often incongruous, meanings).
8. Consider the speech's many examples of parallelism: "born in this country, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage"; "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe." How do they lend themselves to Kennedy's purpose?
9. Kennedy uses *hortative* sentences (language that urges or calls to action) in paragraphs 2–21: "let us," "Let both sides." Later, in paragraphs 26–27, he uses the *imperative*: "ask" and "ask not." What is the difference between the two forms, and why did he start with one and end with the other?

Look at your answers to the preceding questions. Even if you weren't able to answer them all, you may be able to see one or more patterns.

Kennedy's address is formal; the archaic diction (*usunder, foe, writ, forebears*) underscores the formality. The figures of speech make traditional yet powerful connections — *tyranny* and *iron*, *power* and *tiger*, *poverty* and *chains* — and they are a strong source of emotional persuasion. Such figures of speech as personification ("our sister republics") elevate the speech to a grand style. The "beachhead of cooperation" pushing back the "jungle of suspicion" is especially rich and vivid.

The speech's syntax reveals other meanings and adds to the development of the speech's tone. Formality is sustained by a scheme such as anaphora: "Not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are." The many examples of parallelism and especially the antitheses — "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich," juxtaposing the many and the few, the poor with the rich — are intended to unite disparate groups and also to reassure the country that despite Kennedy's narrow margin of victory, he will be everyone's president.

This short address covers a lot of ground. Each of its short paragraphs reveals another one of Kennedy's principles or promises — an early version of what we now call bullet points. There are a variety of sentence types: many are very short, declarative sentences; a few are compound; and more than twenty are complex. Beginning a sentence with a subordinate clause allows steam to build and energizes the sentence's main idea. The speech is a call to action, but Kennedy uses hortatory forms ("let us") more than imperatives ("ask" and "ask not"); his intention is to persuade rather than coerce. And the rhetorical questions in paragraph 24 are also reminders that the young president was building consensus rather

such as *so far*, and *but*. These transitional words move us smoothly from one sentence into the next and represent continuity — the passing of the torch — in the same way an inauguration helps the country make the transition to a new era.

So how do you come up with an idea for an essay about Kennedy's rhetoric and style? One approach is to identify the passage's tone, which is the feelings behind the words. Tone is closely connected to attitude; the speaker's feelings about the subject matter and the audience. And both tone and attitude are created by diction and syntax. His attitude is one of respect for the grand occasion, its history, and the legacy it is carrying forward. The tone of his speech is a combination of respectful eloquence and youthful idealism.

Following is a possible thesis for an essay that synthesizes the preceding observations on Kennedy's inaugural address:

While the speech's respectful eloquence is appropriate for the occasion of an inauguration, its youthful energy and look to the future make it distinctly John F. Kennedy's.

Your close reading has probably revealed all or most of the significant rhetorical and stylistic features in Kennedy's speech. Recognizing the tropes and schemes in a text as rich as this one is good; identifying their purpose and effect is very good. It's fine, for example, if you know that when Kennedy enjoins his listeners to "ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country," he is employing *antimetabole*. It would be better though to explain what the statement *does* in the speech and how it is likely to affect the audience. Writing an excellent essay takes you a step further, from stating *that* to explaining *how*.

Consider what an analysis does. A mere dissection or a disassembly separates something into its component parts, but an analysis explains how it works. This applies as much to a written text as it does to a biological specimen or a machine. In other words, in your essay you should not only describe what the speaker (or writer) is saying, but you should also explain how the diction and syntax serve the speaker's (or writer's) purpose, enrich the text, and affect the audience. You should also consider the rhetorical triangle as it applies to your own compositions: the relationship that you, the speaker, have with your subject and with your audience. Craft your writing so that it deserves to be read and so that it will engage your reader. If you think it's not quite as eloquent as President Kennedy's, don't worry; you're on your way.

• ASSIGNMENT •

Using the preceding thesis or creating your own, write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies John F. Kennedy uses in his inaugural address to achieve his purpose.

Glossary of Selected Tropes and Schemes

John F. Kennedy's inaugural address is almost a textbook of stylistic devices. The following brief glossary of terms gives examples from Kennedy's speech.

- alliteration** Repetition of the same sound beginning several words in sequence
[L]et us go forth to lead the land we love.
- allusion** Brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art
Let both sides write to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah.
- anaphora** Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines
not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are.
- antimetabole** Repetition of words in reverse order
[A]sk not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.
- antithesis** Opposition, or contrast, of ideas or words in a balanced or parallel construction
[W]e shall support any friend, oppose any foe.
- archaic diction** Old-fashioned or outdated choice of words
beliefs for which our forebears fought
- asyndeton** Omission of conjunctions between coordinate phrases, clauses, or words
[W]e shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.
- cumulative sentence** Sentence that completes the main idea at the beginning of the sentence, and then builds and adds on
But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course — both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.
- hortative sentence** Sentence that exhorts, advises, calls to action
Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.
- imperative sentence** Sentence used to command, enjoin, implore, or entreat
My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.
- inversion** Inverted order of words in a sentence (variation of the subject-verb-object order)
United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do.
- juxtaposition** Placement of two things closely together to emphasize comparisons or contrasts
[W]e are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth . . . that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, [emphasis added]
- metaphor** Figure of speech that says one thing is another in order to explain by comparison
And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion,
In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course.
- oxymoron** Paradoxical juxtaposition of words that seem to contradict one another
But this peaceful revolution.
- parallelism** Similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses
Let both sides explore . . . Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals . . . Let both sides seek to invoke . . . Let both sides unite to heed.
- periodic sentence** Sentence whose main clause is withheld until the end
To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support.
- personification** Attribution of a lifelike quality to an inanimate object or idea
with history the final judge of our deeds
- rhetorical question** Figure of speech in the form of a question posed for rhetorical effect rather than for the purpose of getting an answer
Will you join in that historic effort?
- zeugma** Use of two different words in a grammatically similar way but producing different, often incongruous, meanings
Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden.